

### AMENDMENTS

#### In the Claims:

1. (Previously presented) A method of preparing modified fluffed pulp, the method comprising the steps of:

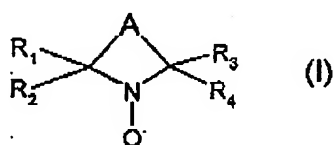
oxidizing cellulose pulp in a suitable medium with an oxidant in the presence of a nitroxide radical mediator; and

fluffing the treated cellulose pulp, the treated cellulose pulp having from about 1 to about 50 mmole of aldehyde functionality per 100 grams of cellulose pulp;

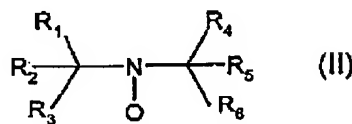
wherein the modified fluff pulp has an increase in wicking rate and wicking capacity compared to an unmodified fluff pulp.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the nitroxyl radical mediator is a di-tertiary alkyl nitroxyl radical having a formula of



or



wherein A is a chain having two or three atoms; each atom is selected from the group consisting of carbon, nitrogen and oxygen; and the R<sub>1</sub>-R<sub>6</sub> groups represent the same or different alkyl groups.

4. (Original) The method according to claim 3 further comprising at least one co-catalyst.
5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the treated cellulose pulp has from about 1 to about 20 mmole aldehyde groups per 100 grams of cellulose pulp.
6. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the nitroxyl radical mediator is TEMPO or 4-acetamido TEMPO.
7. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the nitroxyl radical mediator is in an effective amount to mediate the oxidation.
8. (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein the amount of the nitroxyl radical mediator is from about 0.001 to about 20% by weight, based on the weight of cellulose pulp.
9. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the oxidant is an alkali or alkaline-earth metal hypohalite having an oxidizing power of from about 0.05 to about 15.0 grams active chlorine per 100 grams of substrate.
10. (Original) The method according to claim 9 wherein the oxidant is sodium hypochlorite or sodium hypobromite.
11. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 comprising the step of oxidizing the cellulose pulp in aqueous media with about 0.5% to about 20% sodium hypochlorite in the presence of from about 0.005% to about 5.0% 4-acetamido TEMPO, and up to about 5% sodium bromide, all percents by weight based on the weight of the cellulose pulp.

12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 11 wherein the cellulose pulp is oxidized in the presence of about 1 to about 5% of sodium hypochlorite in the presence of 0.01% to about 0.1% 4-acetamido TEMPO; and from about 0.1% to about 2% sodium bromide, all percents by weight based on the weight of the cellulose pulp.
13. (Original) The method of claim 11 further comprising oxidizing the cellulose pulp in the presence of from about 0.005 % to about 0.5% polyacrylamide.
14. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the treated cellulose pulp has an aldehyde to carboxylic acid functionality ratio of greater than 0.2 based on 100 g of cellulose pulp for each functionality.
15. (Original) The modified fluff pulp made according to the method of Claim 1.
16. (Original) The modified fluff pulp made according to the method of Claim 11.
17. (Original) The modified fluff pulp made according to the method of Claim 13.
18. (Previously presented) A modified fluff pulp formed by oxidizing pulp in an aqueous medium with an oxidant in the presence of a nitroxide radical mediator and fluffing the pulp, the modified fluff pulp having an increase in wicking rate and wicking capacity as compared to an unmodified fluff pulp.
19. (Previously presented) A modified fluff pulp formed by oxidizing pulp in an aqueous medium with an oxidant in the presence of a nitroxide radical mediator and fluffing the pulp, the modified fluff pulp having from about 1 to about 50 mmole of aldehyde functionality per 100 grams of cellulose pulp, the modified fluff pulp further having an increase in structural integrity as compared to an unmodified fluff pulp.
20. (Original) An absorbent article comprising the modified fluff pulp of Claim 15.

21. (Original) An absorbent article comprising the modified fluff pulp of Claim 18.
22. (Original) An absorbent article comprising the modified fluff pulp of Claim 19.
23. (Original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the modified fluff pulp has an increase in structural integrity compared to an unmodified fluff pulp.
24. (Original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the modified fluff pulp has an increase in absorbent capacity compared to an unmodified fluff pulp.
25. (Original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the modified fluff pulp has an increase in odor reduction compared to an unmodified fluff pulp.
26. (Original) A method of preparing modified fluffed pulp, the method comprising the steps of:  
oxidizing cellulose pulp in a suitable medium with an oxidant in the presence of a nitroxide radical mediator; and  
fluffing the treated cellulose pulp, the treated cellulose pulp having from about 1 to about 50 mmole of aldehyde functionality per 100 grams of cellulose pulp;  
wherein the modified fluff pulp has an increase in structural integrity compared to an unmodified fluff pulp.
27. (Original) A method of preparing modified fluffed pulp, the method comprising the steps of:  
oxidizing cellulose pulp in a suitable medium with an oxidant in the presence of a nitroxide radical mediator; and  
fluffing the treated cellulose pulp, the treated cellulose pulp having from about 1 to about 50 mmole of aldehyde functionality per 100 grams of cellulose pulp;  
wherein the modified fluff pulp has an increase in absorbent capacity compared to an unmodified fluff pulp.